



Mashpee
Land
Stewards

Americorp Week: Mission Mashpee!



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- Got an idea for a conservation project? Let us know how we can help your ideas become reality!



Americorp and local volunteers assist in the installation of bluebird boxes at Pickerel Cove Recreation Area

As you visit Mashpee's conservation lands and open space areas, you may have noticed that there's been some upgrades recently. New kiosks have been installed at Johns Pond, Jehu Pond, Mashpee River Woodlands, Pickerel Cove, The Mashpee River Herring Run, John Johansen Conservation area and the Fitch Conservation area. Additionally, there are 5 newly planted pollinator gardens: 2 at the Mashpee Community Garden site, one at Pickerel Cove and one at the entrance to the Jehu Pond Conservation Land. These and many other projects including trail work and fire road clearing are the result of Americorp Week 2013!

Each year, [Americorp Cape Cod](#) selects a town on the Cape to qualify for their annual Americorp Week of volunteer service. This year, it was Mashpee's turn and as a result, over 30 Americorp volunteers descended upon the town from May 20th to May 24th to take on a variety of environmental projects over the course of the week. In addition to kiosk construction and garden planting, Americorp volunteers also assisted the Mashpee Shellfish Constable in constructing over 100 shellfish trays for the town's shellfish propagation program.

Americorp Week was a tremendous success. We were able to engage local volunteers as well as students from local schools. Overgrown trails were

cleared, fire roads were pruned back, pollinator and bluebird boxes were installed and parcels were cleaned up from years of illegal dumping!

With 7 new kiosks installed at various conservation parcels throughout town, including 3 parcels within the [Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge](#), we can now display trail maps as well as notifications about volunteer projects and environmental news. The pollinator gardens are not only beautiful but educational as well. The gardens are specifically planted with native grasses, wildflowers and shrubs that are highly attractive to native pollinator species like bumblebees, butterflies and even hummingbirds! Insect pollinator species are on the decline worldwide, so it is highly encouraged to incorporate native pollinator species into local landscape designs. Not only will you be providing more key habitats for native pollinators, you'll also enjoy the beauty these species provide throughout the Spring, Summer and Fall. For more info on planting pollinator species, go to www.xerces.org

Images from Americorp Week: Thank you to all the volunteers for making it a success!!



Rebirth Through Fire!



Prescribed burn at the Mashpee Pine Barrens Conservation Land (2011)



Same parcel less than 1 year later. Note the vigorous regrowth of scrub oak, the NEC's preferred habitat

The Mashpee National Wildlife Refuge has undergone a transformation of sorts over the last couple of years. The US Fish and Wildlife Service in conjunction with local, state and tribal landowner partners have been engaged in a campaign to improve habitat conditions for the threatened New England Cottontail Rabbit, or NEC.

Not to be confused with the very similar looking Eastern Cottontail, which is commonly found hopping from garden to garden in your local neighborhoods, the NEC is a much more reclusive rabbit that prefers

dense thicket undergrowth habitats and is rarely seen out in the open. The NEC's population has slowly declined over the years to just a few remaining pockets of habitat in the northeast U.S. Early successional forest is NEC's preferred habitat and is characterized by scrub pine/scrub oak barrens with dense, tangled undergrowth. This type of habitat has relied on natural disturbances such as wild fire and storms to reinvigorate itself; however, since development has encroached over much of the NEC's habitat, natural events like these have been suppressed, thus resulting in

less ideal habitat for the rabbit.

In an effort to recapitulate this type of habitat, the US Fish and Wildlife Service has been spearheading a restoration campaign that includes selective pruning of large trees and undergrowth in combination with prescribed burning to bring back and reinvigorate this essential that is not only important to the NEC

but also a host of other creatures, including the Eastern Box Turtle and Pine Barrens Buck Moth.



Tom Eagle, Refuge Director, showing a recently burned area in Mashpee off Lovell's Ln

New sign & kiosk for Johns Pond



Many thanks to Mike Day of [Day Signs](#) in Mashpee for creating the wonderful new sign for Johns Pond Park. This is the third sign Mike has done for the Conservation Dept (the other two being Besse Bog and Noisy Hole). Each sign is made of a polycarbonate material that is resistant to weather and vandalism. We look forward to working with Mike on future signage needs!



Dam Overhaul: Santuit Pond Preserve

The Santuit Pond Dam, an old earthen and wood dam located within the 300+ acre Santuit Pond Preserve, is getting a major facelift. In a progressive state of failure for several years, the dam, which is co-managed by Barnstable and Mashpee, received federal funding from the USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service back in 2012.

Engineers and consultants were brought in to assess the existing condition of the dam and make recommendations for a new dam and fish ladder to replace the old wooden structures. Once a final design was confirmed, the town went out to bid for a contractor to carry out the work. Lawrence Lynch Corporation was chosen to construct a new riprap dam and concrete pool and weir fish ladder.

The work on the dam itself began back in mid March of this year. In order to accommodate proper construction access, the pond had to be lowered over a foot and a half. This was accommodated by opening up the auxiliary spillway and pulling additional boards from the primary fish ladder. The construction on the dam was completed by mid April. Once completed, all construction was temporarily suspended and the boards were put back in to the spillways to increase water level of the pond for the purposes of accommodating the annual herring migration into the pond in mid April. From April to June, thousands of herring entered Santuit Pond via the existing fish ladder.

Once the migration completed in mid June, the contractors once again began the process of lowering the pond for access to construct the new fish ladder. The auxiliary dam was once again opened up to allow herring adults and juveniles to exit the pond through the auxiliary channel that cuts through the southern bogs and hooks back up to the Santuit River downstream from the fish ladder. Construction is currently taking place on the new fish ladder and it should be completed by mid-late August.





Bluebird boxes ready to be installed at Pickerel Cove RA



Americorp Week headquarters: Veteran's Park



Pollinator Garden at the Mashpee Community Gardens



Students working on the trail at Harry DesRosier



Secondary pollinator garden: Mashpee Comm Gardens



Johns Pond Conservation Land clean up



Vista pruning at Harry DesRosier parcel: Mashpee River



Native plantings/Pollinator garden at Pickerel Cove

Creature Feature: American Brook Lamprey



American Brook Lampreys creating a nesting area just below the Mashpee River Herring Run

Brook Lampreys are primitive eel like creatures that inhabit fast flowing clear water streams in various areas in the Mid Atlantic and Eastern US. Adults, which range in size from 5-8 inches, prefer rocky, cobble stream beds for nesting purposes. Unlike their saltwater cousins, Brook Lampreys are not parasitic. Juveniles filter feed on detritus and algae, while adults do not feed and only live for a short period of time. Mating season takes place in Mid to late April, when you'll find adult lampreys creating nest pits along the rocky bottom of stream beds. They use their sucker like mouths to latch onto small rocks and pebbles and move them around to create a "breeding pit" on the river substrate. Juveniles spend most of their lives in silty, mucky areas of brooks and streams

While relatively common in some states, the American Brook Lamprey is a state listed species of special concern here in Massachusetts and the Mashpee River is the only known habitat for this creature on Cape Cod and most of Eastern MA. The presence of the American Brook Lamprey, among other rare or endangered species in the Mashpee River was a major driving force behind the establishment of the Mashpee River Woodlands

Conservation Corridor



The Mashpee Conservation Dept Needs Your Help!!

The Mashpee Conservation Dept is looking for a few good volunteers to assist us in the maintenance of our 5 recently established pollinator gardens. Gardens are located at the entrances to the [Pickerel Cove](#) and [Jehu Pond](#) Conservation Parcels as well 2 gardens at the Mashpee Community Garden site next to Veterans Park off Route 130. We currently have volunteers who take care of watering the Jehu Pond and Pickerel Cove sites; however, we need volunteers to monitor these gardens for encroachment of grasses and weeds. There is a water hose for use at the Community Garden site. For more information on how you can help, please contact Drew McManus, Mashpee Conservation Agent at 508-539-1400 X8539 or email at amcmanus@marshpeema.gov



Photos by Drew McManus, Mashpee Conservation Agent